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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 250

Offered January 11, 2023

Prefiled January 10, 2023

Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, in conjunction with the Office of the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security and the Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, to study the feasibility and benefits of transferring responsibility for the Department of Juvenile Justice from the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security to the Secretary of Health and Human Resources. Report.

Patrons—Lucas, Favola, Locke and Surovell; Delegates: Adams, D.M., Clark, Guzman, Hope and Price

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the Department of Juvenile Justice provides effective accountability measures and interventions that improve the lives of court-involved youths until they reach the age of 21 and prepare them for success as productive citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Juvenile Justice responds to at-risk youths using a balanced approach that provides a structured system of incentives and graduated sanctions, in both community and direct care settings, in order to (i) ensure accountability for such youths' actions through a variety of services and programs that build skills and competencies, including substance abuse and aggression management treatment and academic and career-readiness education, and (ii) enable such youths to become productive members of the community upon release from the Department of Juvenile Justice's supervision; and

WHEREAS, there is a correlation between a locality's child poverty rate and minority youth population and the rate at which such locality transfers custody of youths to the Department of Juvenile Justice; and

WHEREAS, the majority of youths who are admitted into a Department of Juvenile Justice direct care program appear to have significant symptoms of a mental health disorder, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, or a substance use disorder and have been prescribed psychotropic medication at some point during their lives; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Juvenile Justice is the only state agency providing services to youths that is not overseen by the Secretary of Health and Human Resources; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security and the Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, be directed to study the feasibility and benefits of transferring responsibility for the Department of Juvenile Justice from the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security to the Secretary of Health and Human Resources.

In conducting its study, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security and the Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, shall study the feasibility and benefits of transferring responsibility for the Department of Juvenile Justice from the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security to the Secretary of Health and Human Resources.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission by the Office of the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security and the Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission for this study, upon request.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall complete its meetings by October 1, 2023, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2024 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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